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# — BAY OF PIGS TRAGEDY — Eisenhower Denies He Planned Invasion of Cuba

By EARL MAZO, Newsday

After the failure at the Bay of Pigs in 1961, former President Eisenhower's only comment was to call for bipartisan unity behind President Kennedy.

That was in keeping with Mr. Eisenhower's lifelong practice of supporting the nation's Commander in Chief in times of crises and shunning partisan excesses.

Over the years Mr. Eisenhower, a Republican, also usually has ignored politically tinged distortions of his performance as President, military leader and elder statesman.

Now, however, the ex-President feels it would be well to set the record straight on at least a couple of items in recent intimate histories of Kennedy's Democratic administration by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., and Theodore C. Sorenson, ranking members of Kennedy's staff.

Mr. Eisenhower and several of his knowledgeable former government associates view the Schlesinger and Sorenson attempts to link the Eisenhower administration with the Cuba invasion fiasco and discredit Eisenhower-appointed military and intelligence experts as a perversion of history and a disservice to the late President Kennedy, who never sought to duck responsibility for his executive decisions.

The specifically disputed material by both writers is summed up in this paragraph from the Sorenson version:

"On January 20, 1961, John Kennedy inherited the plan, the planners, and most troubling of all, the Cuban exile brigade . . . Unlike an inherited policy statement or executive order, this inheritance could not be simply disposed of by presidential rescission or withdrawal . . ."

Mr. Eisenhower declares, "There was no tactical or operational plan even discussed" as of the day he turned the presidency over to Mr. Kennedy.

During the transition period between the election in November, 1960, and the inauguration in January, Mr. Eisenhower reviewed for his successor all pending matters, including a secret program inaugurated less than a year before to equip and train anti-Castro Cuban refugees. The retiring President stressed that there had been no decisions as to how the Cuban forces would be used, if at all. Mr. Eisenhower had made no commitments that might bind the new President in dealing with the Castro problem. In fact, the armed refugee group was still so small and relatively unprepared that it could easily have been disbanded if the incoming administration considered its existence unnecessary.



MR. EISENHOWER

As for the nonpolitical experts Mr. Kennedy chose to retain for his administration—notably Allan Dulles, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and the military Joint Chiefs of Staff—Mr. Eisenhower says:

"These men over decades of devoted service have shown their capabilities, their sense of logic, their understanding of the problems involved in this kind of venture. There is no more expert group in their profession than these men . . . I had the greatest confidence in them."

NOTHING THE FORMER PRESIDENT WAS TOLD by Mr. Kennedy and others after the Bay of Pigs debacle diminished his faith and confidence in Dulles and the military chiefs.

On the other hand, he believes the very disparagement of these seasoned professionals shows how unqualified the former presidential assistants were to deal with the sort of problem involved in a critical international venture like the Bay of Pigs invasion.

As most Americans, President Eisenhower welcomed the end of the Batista dictatorship in 1959 and hoped the new regime of Fidel Castro would live up to its promises of free elections and democracy in the exotic island republic just eight jet minutes from Florida.

Within a year, however, Castro created a dictatorship that was worse even than Batista's, and President Eisenhower had concluded that strong measures might be required to thwart Castro's apparent intention of establishing an outpost for Communist subversion in the Western Hemisphere.

Exactly what would have to be done—and when—remained to be thought out and decided. But the gravity of the situation neither awed nor frightened those facing it. Mr. Eisenhower and his administration's military and intelligence experts were not strangers to the nuances of contending with Communist intrusion in Latin America. Jacobo Arbenz Guzman, ex-dictator, whose efforts to make Guatemala a haven for the Soviets led to his downfall in 1954, would bear witness to that.

In mid-March, 1960, President Eisenhower decided that the United States would secretly aid anti-Castro Cubans. The C. I. A. was directed to train and equip volunteers at bases in Guatemala, Panama and Southern Florida. The covert military instruction program was begun partly in response to pleas by hundreds of refugees for something constructive to do. It was felt training would bolster the spirits of thousands who were fleeing the Castro dictatorship, and would give them hope that, in time, they would be able to "do the job" of ousting the Communist regime.

In essence, the long-range Eisenhower policy was to encourage and prepare Cubans to liberate their country.

President Eisenhower kept in close touch with developments through the summer and autumn, and personally reviewed numerous ideas and suggestions that normally would have been sifted out before reaching the White House. (For example, he rejected a proposal that Cuban was possible in Central America.)

In recalling the period, Mr. Eisenhower notes the